

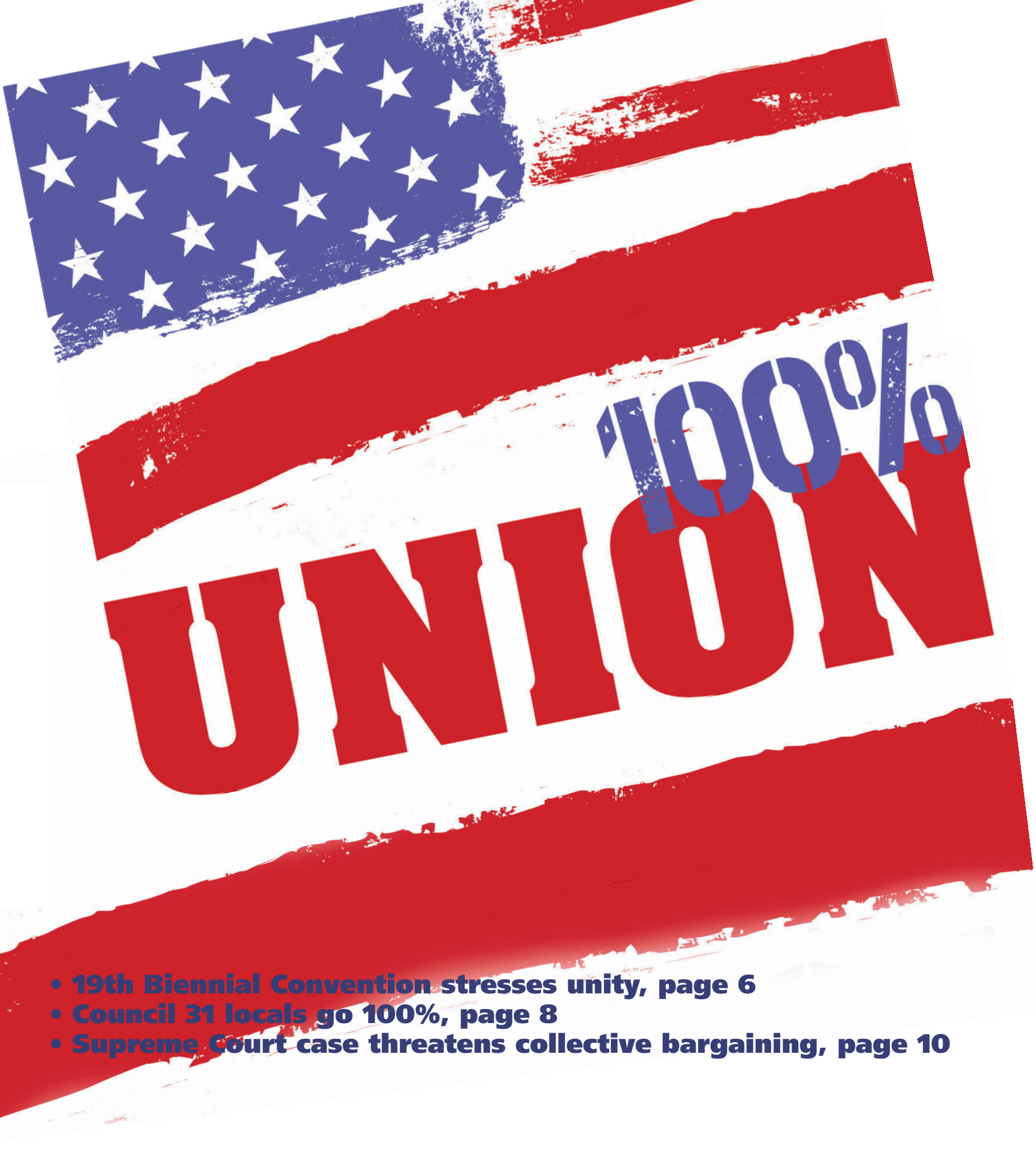


ON THE

#168 • NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2015

MOVE

Illinois Council 31—American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—AFL-CIO



Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
AFSCME

AFSCME Council 31
205 N. Michigan Ave.
21st Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

- **19th Biennial Convention stresses unity, page 6**
- **Council 31 locals go 100%, page 8**
- **Supreme Court case threatens collective bargaining, page 10**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Fight to the Death?

Let's hope not. Instead, we can move Illinois forward.



BY
ROBERTA LYNCH

BY REACHING OUT TO OUR COMMUNITIES, WE CAN HELP TURN THE TIDE AGAINST THE TURNAROUND.

As a candidate, Bruce Rauner claimed his billion-dollar success in private equity qualified him to run state government. But as former Governor Jim Edgar recently pointed out, Rauner's path to profit was, "You buy a business, you tear it apart and you sell it. ... I don't think you're going to tear apart the state and sell it. He might want to, but you can't do that."

UNFORTUNATELY, EDGAR'S COUNSEL HASN'T DISSUADED RAUNER FROM UNLEASHING ON ILLINOIS the same tactics that served him so well in the rapacious corporate world. His firm looked to take over troubled companies or those least able to fight back, like nursing homes for the frail elderly or group homes for the severely disabled. And they did it largely with money from public pension funds, hiding their high fees and questionable business practices behind an iron curtain of secrecy.

Rauner's first year as governor has been marked by the same brute tactics. State government has gone months with no budget and millions of citizens are suffering as a result, all to leverage pressure for what he calls his "pro-business" Turn-around Agenda.

But what exactly is that agenda? A moving target, it has changed repeatedly since his inauguration. Most recently it appears to include freezing property taxes by eliminating 'prevailing rate' policies in public construction projects, taking collective bargaining rights away from local government employees, cutting workers' compensation benefits for people injured on the job, instituting term limits and changing the way legislative districts are drawn.

Rauner claims his "reforms" will grow the economy and create more jobs, but the facts tell a different story.

Columnist Rich Miller did the math to show that eliminating the prevailing wage would likely cut property taxes by only 0.74%. Yes, there's a decimal before that 74—a reduction of less than 1%.

Meanwhile workers' com-

pensation costs are already on their way down, without any help from Rauner. A new report shows that Illinois medical claim costs dropped 15% over the past year, the biggest decline of the 17 states surveyed and a much steeper drop than Indiana or Wisconsin.

Nor does the slightest evidence suggest that stripping public employees of their right to collective bargaining would aid economic growth. Even a glance at states where public workers aren't free to form unions shows that Illinois has higher employment and family incomes than just about every one of them.

In sum, driving down wages and limiting workers' rights won't make our state more prosperous for anyone but corporations and the wealthy who are already doing just fine. To the contrary, middle-class workers would have less money in their pockets, less spending power in their communities, and less say on the job.

None of this is better for business. Companies want stability, not the chaos Rauner is courting. They want sound infrastructure—the kind that well-paid, union-represented construction workers produce—as well as high-quality schools and a well-educated workforce. And they want customers with money to spend. That's why companies like Oscar Mayer and SC Johnson are moving from Rauner's model state, Scott Walker's Wisconsin, to our own Illinois.

Yet Rauner continues to hold the budget hostage to his demands. As a result, seniors face massive cuts in home health care and other life-sustaining programs. Tens of thousands of

families have been denied child care assistance. Programs for kids with autism and epilepsy are starved of resources. Domestic violence shelters are forced to cut services or even close their doors. Early intervention programs for children with disabilities are disappearing. Supports for victims of rape and other crimes are in jeopardy.

And Rauner appears to be deliberately targeting certain programs and regions, cutting off funding for local government 911 emergency services, shuttering the Illinois State Museum sites, closing the Sparta shooting complex and the Hardin County Work Camp, and eliminating the jobs of conservation police officers who protect our state parks and the citizens who use them.

State universities face an ever-deepening crisis. More than 130,000 students who rely on the MAP grant program are in limbo, not knowing whether they'll have the assistance they need. Universities themselves are struggling to meet payroll, with many considering massive tuition increases or hundreds of layoffs. The Wall Street agency Moody's downgraded their bond ratings, making it harder to borrow the money needed to keep operating.

And then there's Rauner's effort to bring the hammer down on state employees, in effect forcing them to make the biggest contribution to Illinois' budget fix via huge hikes in their health care costs. State contract negotiations have become a pitched battle, with workers defending the economic security they've fought hard to achieve.

Where will it all end? Will our state continue in its death spiral, driven down by Governor Rauner's bizarre patchwork of non-reforming reforms? Or will common sense and basic decency reassert themselves and set us all on a better course?

AFSCME members have an important part to play in helping to shape the answer. By reaching out to our communities and building a broad coalition of all those who want to forge a positive and productive future for our state, we can help turn the tide against the Turnaround.

On the Move

AFSCME Illinois On the Move is published six times annually by Illinois Public Employees Council 31 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO. Send correspondence to: nmcnamara@afscme31.org or: AFSCME, On the Move, 205 N. Michigan Ave., 21st Floor, Chicago, IL 60601

Roberta Lynch, Executive Director
Mike Newman, Deputy Director
Nell McNamara, Editor
Dolores Wilber, Designer

Council 31 Executive Board Officers

STATE EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT
Ralph Portwood, Stateville CC, Local 1866
CITY/COUNTY EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT
Garmin Willis-Goodloe, Cook County Hospital, Local 1111
PRIVATE SECTOR EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Yolanda Woods, Hope Institute Local 2481
UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT
Dorinda Miller, U of I Clericals, Local 3700
SECRETARY
Pat Ousley, Department of Employment Security, Local 1006
TREASURER
Rob Fanti, Sheridan CC, Local 472

Board Members

STATE CONFERENCE BOARD CO-CHAIRS
Gloria Arseneau, (RC-14), Northeastern Illinois State Employees, Local 2794
Gary Ciacchio, Shapiro, DC Local 29
Kathy Lane, (RC-63), Northwestern Illinois State Employees, Local 448

REGION I VICE-PRESIDENTS (COOK AND LAKE COUNTIES)

Safiya Felters, Department of Health-care and Family Services, Local 2854
Ellen Larrimore, Northeastern Illinois University, Local 1989
Stephen Mittons, Department of Children and Family Services, Local 2081
John Rayburn, Chicago Public Library, Local 1215
Kobie Robinson, Cook County Assessor's Office, Local 3835

REGION II VICE-PRESIDENTS (NORTHERN ILLINOIS)

Garry Cacciapaglia, city of Rockford, Local 1058
Dave Delrose, Will County, Local 1028
Carlene Erno, Illinois State Employees, Local 2615
Ruby Robinson, Illinois State Employees, Local 2833
Yurvette Simmons, United Cerebral Palsy of Will County, Local 3237

REGION III VICE-PRESIDENTS (CENTRAL ILLINOIS)

Mark Kerr, McFarland Zone Center, Local 2767
Gary Kroeschel, Sangamon County State Employees, Local 2224
Matt Lukow, Springfield Area State Employees, Local 1964
David Morris, Illinois State Employees, Local 805
Steve Nordyke, Department of Health-care and Family Services, Local 2600
Trudy Williams, Fulton County Sheriffs Dept. & Courthouse, Local 3433

REGION IV VICE-PRESIDENTS (SOUTHERN ILLINOIS)

Chris Milton, Madison County, Local 799
Duane Montgomery, Metro-East State Employees, Local 1805
Cary Quick, Choate MH/DC, Local 141
Mike Turner, Southern Illinois Department of Corrections, Local 415

Trustees

Stephen Howerter, Canton Correctional Center Employees, Local 3585
Tom Minick, Moline Board of Education, Local 672
Miguel Vazquez, Aurora Sanitary District, Local 3297

Retiree Chapter 31 Representative

Larry Brown

State employees in the fight for a fair contract

Rauner Administration still saying 'no wage increases, no step increases'



When state contract negotiations got underway with Illinois' new Republican governor Bruce Rauner last February, the 200-plus members of the AFSCME bargaining committee were confronted with dozens of proposals clearly intended to wreak havoc with state employees' rights on the job and drive down their standard of living.

EIGHT MONTHS LATER, RAUNER'S LIST OF DEMANDS HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY WHITTLED down by union members determined to hold their ground and prepared to fight on multiple fronts. But the governor's core goals remain the same. He's still looking for ways to demoralize and divide the workforce and to undercut hard-won economic gains.

"Governor Rauner is holding the state budget hostage to his demand that legislators eliminate the right of public employees to have a voice on the job. He's utterly indifferent to the great harm he's causing to Illinois citizens," AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. "And he's trying to hold state employees hostage in these contract negotiations to wipe out their hard-won rights and economic security."

Four-year freeze

WHILE ALL ACROSS ILLINOIS, state employees are doing more with less to provide the services on which citizens depend, the Rauner administration continues to demand

a four-year freeze on wages, including no step or longevity increases for any employee.

The administration insists they are only proposing the elimination of step increases for the duration of the contract now being negotiated, but simultaneously they are pushing for a so-called 'merit pay' scheme that would hand out 'bonuses' to favored workers while leaving the great majority of employees without an additional dime for four years. In this scheme, only employees who meet certain 'high performance' criteria—measured each year—would be eligible for a one-time bonus. The administration's bargaining team could not define what would constitute 'high performance' for any particular title, but said that they would develop those criteria for all the titles in state government over the coming year.

AFSCME continues to stress that such 'pay for performance' schemes have failed around the country and even in Illinois state government, as they invariably descend into petty workplace politics, supervisor subjectivity, political cronyism and

favoritism. The great majority of state employees who give their all every day—caring for aged veterans, aiding individuals with severe disabilities, protecting abused children, ensuring security in state prisons, keeping our air and water clean, maintaining state parks and conservation areas and so much more—would be left entirely at the mercy of management.

Doubling health care premiums

THE ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO pushing for a radical restructuring of the state health insurance program that would reduce access to care and increase employee costs. This new scheme would put Illinois dead last in the entire country among state health care plans.

For employees to keep their current health plan, they would have to pay double their current premium in the first year alone, and costs could continue going up from there.

"Out-of-pocket costs would increase dramatically. We would have to pay more for each doctor visit or med-

ical procedure, resulting in less access and lower-quality health care," said bargaining team member Kyle Spencer, a correctional officer. "That will be too hard for many families to bear."

On average, state employees' total health care costs would jump by \$3,100 in just the first year of the contract.

Selling off state services

PUSHING A PLAN IN WHICH STATE employees would bid against private contractors for their own work, the Rauner administration argued it should have complete authority to outsource any and all state services without meeting the standards for economy, efficiency or fair treatment of employees that the union contract currently requires.

The administration wants to remove all relevant existing contract language, which states that the employer must avoid "insofar as practicable, the subcontracting of work performed by employees in the bargaining unit," and that any work that is contracted out can only be for reasons of

"greater efficiency, economy or related factors."

In this so-called "managed competition" scheme, private companies could win bids by paying employees lower wages, reducing benefits, cutting corners on service provision or leveraging political connections. There would be no accountability to taxpayers or citizens who depend on the services.

Holding fast

STATE EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN firm in resisting Rauner's all-out assault on their rights and economic security. As a result of their grassroots activism all across the state, including outreach to state legislators, the administration has modified some of its most extreme proposals. It dropped its efforts to abolish the Upward Mobility Program and to allow the governor to suspend the entire union contract whenever he declared an 'emergency.'

When state employees let their communities and elected officials know that the governor appeared to be planning a state government shutdown to force employees to accept his extreme contract terms, public pressure forced Rauner to commit in writing that his administration would remain at the bargaining table. All current contract terms will remain in place unless the parties reach an impasse in negotiations.

Be prepared to take action

THE GOVERNOR IS CONTINUING to wage war on working people and their unions.

"AFSCME members want to keep on doing our jobs, serving the public that depends on us," said bargaining team member Carol Morris, a public service administrator at the Illinois Department of Employment Security. "That's why we have to be ready to do whatever it takes to stop Rauner's policies that are so destructive to us and the families we serve."

"Each time the call goes out for grassroots action, AFSCME members have responded," Lynch said. "If we maintain that determination and unity, we can gain a contract settlement that will safeguard the vital services we provide and the fair treatment that is so essential to our working lives."

Rauner refuses to pay steps

The Rauner administration has refused to pay step increases in the current fiscal year that began July 1. In response, AFSCME filed an unfair labor practice charge and a state court suit seeking to compel payment of the step increases. The Illinois Labor Relations Board has issued a complaint finding that the union has raised issues of fact and law sufficient to merit a hearing on the ULP charge, and a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge is expected in the coming weeks.

Chicago city budget has wins, losses for working families

Mayor raises revenue, AFSCME stops privatization of 311 services



AFSCME Local 654 members Cynthia Haslem, Mike Kessler and Leonettsi Hardy Rogers are dedicated 311 operators. Saved from privatization in this year's budget, Chicago's nonemergency call center responds to nearly four million calls a year.

Chicago faces a severe funding shortfall as a result of decades of phony budgeting that relied on unacknowledged borrowing from the city's pension funds.

THE FY 16 BUDGET AIMS TO HONESTLY ADDRESS THE CITY'S REVENUE NEEDS THROUGH increased taxes, fines and fees.

"There's no doubt Chicago needs increased revenues," AFSCME Council 31 Policy and Legislative Specialist Adrienne Alexander said. "Instead of continuing to borrow from city workers' pension funds, we're pleased that this budget makes the required contributions and sets the city on a more responsible path going forward."

Although AFSCME has advocated for progressive revenue measures to ensure that wealthy people and big corporations are paying their share, those measures could not garner the support needed to offer an alternative to Mayor Rahm Emanuel's plan to increase the property tax rate and institute a new fee for garbage pickup.

AFSCME halts privatization of Chicago call center

IN HIS INITIAL BUDGET ADDRESS, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced plans to outsource Chicago's 311 call center, which handles all non-emergency calls from citizens seeking help or information. The call center takes nearly four million calls annually and has received many awards and accolades as a leader in performance and innovation.

Chicago's 311 operators are members of AFSCME Local 654. They led the effort to save 311 from privatization, taking their story to aldermen and the media. Urging the city not to outsource the call center, longtime 311 staff member Debra Powell told reporters that "the mayor should invest in what he already has: knowledgeable, experienced operators who



311 Operator Debra Powell speaks with a TV reporter at City Hall.

live in the city."

In the wake of an intensive AFSCME lobbying effort, aldermen started speaking out against the mayor's plan. When 36 of them signed a letter to Emanuel during the final phase of the budget debate saying that privatization would wipe out jobs and make city government less responsive, the mayor finally dropped his plan to privatize 311.

"Based on the feedback from City Council, we will be not be moving forward with 311 privatization in 2016," Office of Budget and Management Director Alexandra Holt said. "OBM will work closely with the

City Council to identify funding necessary to continue City management of the 311 system."

Cuts, privatization in HIV services

SINCE MAYOR EMANUEL TOOK office, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has seen a 50 percent cut in staffing. In 2016 he plans to privatize the last two HIV/AIDS Primary Care Clinics and to eliminate the HIV/AIDS Training Unit.

Mayor Emanuel should have learned from the disastrous closure of six mental health clinics that public clinics provide a critical safety

net. The city made promises about smooth transitions and increased access in that privatization scheme, but less than a year after the mental health clinics closed, CDPH could not account for some 500 former clients.

The privatization of the HIV/AIDS clinics in Uptown and Englewood may result in similar problems. Like the mental health clinics, they serve a population whose experience of stigma makes it difficult to transition to different health care providers. As a result, clinic clients may struggle with a disruption in care and some may fall through the cracks.

The HIV/AIDS Training Unit trains and assesses private agency clinicians and outreach workers. Eliminating this successful program would yield only minimal savings.

AFSCME efforts to halt the privatization of the HIV services were hampered by support for the move from HIV/AIDS advocates. But despite the budget's passing, the union will continue to press the Emanuel Administration to keep these vital services in-house.

Chicago passes privatization ordinance

AFTER THREE YEARS OF WORK BY AFSCME and its partners, including Ald. Roderick T. Sawyer, the Privatization Transparency Accountability and Performance Ordinance was passed at the Chicago City Council's November meeting.

Privatizing 311 would have resulted in the loss of more than 50 family-supporting jobs in Chicago. The 311 employees are taxpaying Chicago residents who have worked hard for a bit of economic security.

One of the mayor's stated reasons to privatize the center was its supposed need for expensive system upgrades.

AFSCME and aldermen argued that a private contractor would not only charge the city for those upgrades but would expect to make a profit.

"The many risks and significant harm of outsourcing 311 far outweighed any likely savings," Alexander said. "This is true for most privatization schemes." Likewise, cuts to public health programs and staffing undermine access to quality services.

That's why AFSCME urged

Continued on the facing page



Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Local 2500 members fought hard to ensure a level playing field for cab drivers and ride-hailing companies. Allowing unregulated companies access to Chicago's airports will hurt cab drivers.

Continued from the facing page

passage of the ordinance, which provides a clear standard for evaluating privatization proposals and protects good jobs for Chicago.

Cab drivers, customers lose in budget vote

FOR MONTHS, CAB DRIVERS United/AFSCME Local 2500 members met with their aldermen to educate them about the work they do and how the city's cab regulations coupled with the unregulated ride-hailing industry have devastated their livelihood. Giant corporations like Uber and Lyft profit from providing the same service as cab drivers without being required to follow the same rules.

The mayor's budget proposal included a plan to allow ride-hailing companies to pick up passengers at Chicago airports and McCormick Place, a move that would further undercut cab drivers who work hard to provide for their families. AFSCME joined with concerned aldermen to seek to block the plan, which did nothing to address the unfair advantages that ride-hailing companies have.

These companies have effectively carved their own loopholes in Chicago's laws to avoid the costs of licenses, train-

ing, background checks and other basic consumer protections. Cab drivers argue that the policy is not only putting public safety at risk and destroying family-sustaining jobs, it's allowing hugely profitable corporations to pocket millions of dollars that should go to support city services.

"Before I received my public chauffeur license, I had to go to school and pass a law enforcement-backed background check," said Hilton Adolinama, a Chicago cab driver and member of Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Local 2500. "Every year I must pass a physical and drug test. Twice a year my car has to pass a 70-point inspection at a city-approved garage, and I pay thousands of dollars to stay in compliance with the rules and regulations that guide my profession."

Rallying under the slogan, "Same Service, Same Rules," cab drivers fought hard against the mayor's proposal. They held job actions that stopped traffic at the airports and McCormick Place. They drove in a caravan to visit aldermen at their offices. They held news conferences and deluged the City Council with phone calls. But in the end, although the mayor's plan was amended, it did little to close Uber's special regulatory loopholes.

Rauner continues to hold state budget hostage

When the General Assembly convened on November 10 for a single-day session, Gov. Rauner finally succeeded in his goal of shaking up Springfield—just not in the way that he intended.

AFTER HE ACTED UNILATERALLY TO CHANGE RULES GOVERNING STATE SPENDING FOR CHILD care assistance and home care for the frail elderly, families found themselves unable to afford the child care they needed, frightened senior citizens worried they'd be left without the services that let them remain in their homes, and the governor faced a hailstorm of criticism from across the political spectrum.

Beginning in late summer, child care and senior advocates and SEIU Health-care, the union of child care and home health workers, had mounted a vigorous campaign for legislation to roll back Rauner's new rules and restore the funding needed to maintain both programs. At first Rauner simply attacked the bills, claiming they would cost the state billions of dollars. But by November even legislators in his own party were unmoved by his hyperbole and keenly aware of the anger of their constituents. At the eleventh hour, the governor agreed to compromise, voluntarily rolling back the new rules he'd imposed.

But advocates were not persuaded that the governor's promises would be kept, so they continued to work to pass the bills. If the governor now agreed with their goals, why not support the legislation? But Rauner maintained his vigorous opposition and both measures fell one vote short in the House. Only one Democrat failed to vote to protect children and seniors: Rep. Ken Dunkin.

Although the legislation didn't pass, the grassroots lobbying campaign was a big success, forcing Rauner to fix the child and elder care problems his new rules created.

A win for the Illinois State Museum, hope for Hardin

WHEN GOV. RAUNER announced his plan to close the Illinois State Museum and its related sites, AFSCME

went into high gear to defeat the scheme. Spirited protests against the closure garnered widespread media coverage.

But despite the support for the ISM, Rauner was determined to close its doors. Eventually, in response to an AFSCME lawsuit, the Administration halted the layoffs associated with the closures, but Rauner insisted the facilities would still be shuttered—

We have to support legislators who are standing firm against the governor's anti-worker demands.

even though employees still reported to work.

So AFSCME worked with Senator Andy Manar and Representative Emily McAsey to develop SB 317, legislation requiring the state to operate the museum and its associated sites and keep them open to the public.

The bill passed the Senate earlier this fall and on November 10 it passed the House by a vote of 82-32, with 12 Republicans breaking

with the governor to support it. Rauner is widely expected to veto the bill, so the real test will come when the General Assembly must decide whether to override his veto.

AFSCME is also working for passage of HB 4236, sponsored by Rep. Brandon Phelps, to require the state to continue to operate the Hardin County DOC Work Camp, which plays a vital role in inmate rehabilitation.

The fight isn't over

"DESPITE LIMITED PROGRESS, Governor Rauner continues to hold the state budget hostage, even as the damage from the budget impasse continues to spread," AFSCME Council 31 Legislative Director Joanna Webb-Gauvin said.

State universities are warning that they may have to begin layoffs or even raise tuition. Programs to aid victims of domestic violence, rape and other violent crimes are faced with having to cut back or even close their doors. Community disability agencies are struggling. Local governments warn that 911 services are at risk and some can't even pay their utility bills.

"Make no mistake, the governor is responsible for all this chaos," Webb-Gauvin said. "We have to support legislators who are standing firm against his demands that they strip bargaining rights from public employees as a condition of approving a budget."

STAND UP!
FOR **FAIRNESS!**

DECEMBER 5-10

VISIT AFSCME31.ORG/RALLY FOR DATES & LOCATIONS

Governor Rauner is holding hostage Illinois' budget, public services and a fair contract for state employees.



WE'RE COMING TOGETHER ACROSS ILLINOIS TO RALLY FOR FAIRNESS

Convention delegates chart path forward



Gathering under the theme “Strong, United, Determined,” AFSCME members from across the state met in Springfield October 15-17 for the 19th biennial convention of Council 31.

MORE THAN 600 DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES ELECTED BY THEIR LOCAL UNIONS CAME TOGETHER at a time of unprecedented challenges to shape the policies and plans that will guide Council 31’s work and vision over the next two years. They heard rousing speakers and

attended some of the 20 workshops offered to equip participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to meet those challenges.

Among the resolutions that chart a path forward for our union, delegates:

- Pledged an unflinching

defense of collective bargaining rights now under attack;

- Laid out a strategy to become 100% union in every local in the face of a potential Supreme Court ruling outlawing Fair Share fees;

- Emphasized the importance of raising wages for community disability support staff;

- Focused attention on the importance of outreach to our communities;

- Affirmed the need to continue to advocate for retirement security;

- Renewed the commitment to oppose privatization of public services;
- Called for improved safety in correctional facilities.

Strong, United, Determined

IN HER KEYNOTE ADDRESS, AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch stressed the critical fight against Governor Rauner’s anti-worker agenda. “The governor is trying to force the changes he wants by harming the most vulnerable among us—the poor, the elderly, the disabled. People are being hurt every single day because of his personal obsession with destroying unions. It’s up to us to stop him,” she said. “And we can. The labor movement is unified like never before. We have the support of our communities. And we

won’t back down.”

Participants left the convention reinvigorated and ready to return to their local unions with a renewed focus on encouraging every member to get involved in the union and determined to resist the unrelenting attacks that the corporate elite and their allies continue to unleash on working families in our country.

This issue of On the Move provides a recap of the exciting work AFSCME members did together. Read on for more coverage, including:

- AFSCME members recognized for making a difference (page 7)

- Voices from the Frontlines: AFSCME locals go 100% Union (page 8-9)

For the complete text of all resolutions adopted at the Convention, visit AFSCME31.org/resolutions.

Words of inspiration

Speakers shared encouragement, support and rallying cries for action



“**T**he labor movement is more united than ever. We’re coming together in the face of an ever-worsening onslaught on the rights of working people to have a voice on the job and in the

political arena. It’s up to all of us to keep alive the dream of a better future for our families, our communities and our country.”

—AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch



“**I**llinois is ground zero in the fight for workers’ rights. With every action Governor Rauner takes, he disrespects the history of working families and unions. In a time when too much wealth is in too few hands, he wants to jeopardize your ability to take care of your families. You are not alone in this fight! 1.6 million AFSCME members across the country are standing with you. We draw on your spirit and determination as you fight for ALL of us.”

—AFSCME International President Lee Saunders



“**N**o single organization can fight the enemies of labor today. We have to stick together and we have to fight together.”

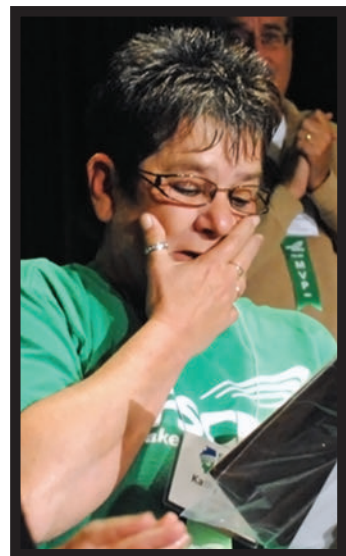
—Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan

Awards recognize AFSCME members who make a difference

At its 19th Biennial Convention, AFSCME Council 31 recognized four outstanding union members for their achievements and contributions at work and in their communities.

THESE FOUR INDIVIDUALS WERE NOMINATED BY THEIR CO-WORKERS AS EXCEPTIONAL AFSCME members and public servants who embody the union values of justice, activism and service.

Steward of the Year: Kathy Kissiar



AN EMPLOYEE OF WEXFORD Health Services and a member of AFSCME Local 494 at the Pontiac Correctional Center for nearly 25 years, Kathy Kissiar was named 2015 AFSCME Council 31 Steward of Year for her dedication to informing and engaging her fellow members.

Kissiar is not afraid of a fight. When members at her worksite were effectively forced to work without getting paid, she led her co-workers on a march each day until the issue was resolved.

Kissiar is not afraid of a fight. When members at her worksite were effectively forced to work without getting paid, she led her co-workers on a march each day until the issue was resolved. AFSCME members at Pontiac Correctional Center know they can always count on Kissiar, especially when it comes to standing up against Governor Rauner's anti-union assaults. She has done whatever is needed and more to be part of this critical fight for working people—including challenging the chairman of the Livingston County Board as she testified against Rauner's so-called "turnaround agenda," reminding him that he is a retired DOC union member.

Kissiar has served as an executive board member, a bargaining committee member and a grievance committee member—and even more importantly, she is always ready to take a stand for what's right.

Public Service Award: Timothy Olaosebikan and Darryn Hayes

AFSCME COUNCIL 31'S PUBLIC Service Award winners go the extra mile to give top-quality public service. They play important roles in their communities and even save lives when disaster threatens.



As an employee of the Ray Graham Association and a member of AFSCME Local 3492, Timothy Olaosebikan serves adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

One Saturday last spring, a visiting father was enjoying breakfast with his son, a Ray Graham resident, together with other parents and residents in the dining hall. Olaosebikan was in another room when he heard sudden, distressed shouting coming from the dining room. He rushed in to find the son chok-

These four individuals embody union values: justice, activism and service.

ing, a look of fear and terror on the father's face as he stood helpless at his side.

Due to his training, Olaosebikan knew just what to do. He began performing the Heimlich maneuver. But the man still couldn't breathe. Olaosebikan didn't give up and finally the food lodged in the man's throat was loosened and he could begin to breathe again.

A short time later, the father wrote a letter to Ray Graham management, thanking the public service "hero" who saved his son's life that morning and serves as a reminder of the life-saving work that so many direct-support personnel do every day.



A correctional officer since 1999, Darryn Hayes is a member of AFSCME Local 1866 at Stateville Correctional Center, where he was recently recognized as Security Employee of the Year due to his exceptional leadership, professionalism and positive approach to his work.

Hayes is deeply concerned about his community and believes that he can make a difference in the lives of others. He puts those beliefs in action through charitable projects such as Life Choices We Make, a youth advocacy group he founded to build self-esteem and social skills among young people to help them make better choices and stay off the streets. He also organizes an annual back-to-school drive to collect book bags, coats and school supplies for children in need. Hayes asks his friends, family, co-workers and the wider community to participate—and because they see his

principles in action, they want to help too.

Hayes was recognized for embodying one of our union's most important values—service—both at work and in his community.



Jane Fitzgerald Award: Catherine Gitchoff

"JANE FITZGERALD WAS A SPECIAL woman," AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said of the local union activist who passed away 13 years ago. "We see Jane's spirit in everyone who shares her commitment to building a stronger labor movement that fights for both the rights of workers and for economic and social justice for all."

A member of AFSCME Local 799 (Madison County employees), Cathy Gitchoff received the 2015 Fitzgerald Award for her dedication to her union as a vehicle for social and economic justice. She has been a steward and an executive board member, and currently serves as vice president of her local and on the board of her local labor central body.

Co-workers and fellow union members praised Gitchoff as an unrelenting advocate and the perfect example of a true leader. Their nomination letters were full of gratitude: "We would be lost without her..." "She is the heart and soul of our union..." "She ALWAYS goes the extra mile to fight and help all of us..." "Fighting for the average, hardworking American is her mission and passion. She shows no fear in standing up to those who wish to deny us a better future."

Like Jane Fitzgerald, Gitchoff believes that a wrong against one person is a wrong against us all. She is a true champion for justice.



"Collective bargaining rights are human rights! We are with you in this fight. Thank you for serving the people of Illinois and working to make all of our lives better."

—Illinois Federation of Teachers President Dan Montgomery



"The middle class is under wholesale assault and working families have to fight back. We cannot depend on corporate kindness. Everything we have is because someone fought for it, bled for it, and even died for it."

—Illinois State Representative Carol Ammons



VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINES

In the critical battles AFSCME members now face, it's all hands on deck. At the convention, these six men and women shared their locals' stories of how they reached the 100% milestone — every employee a full union member!



Bonnie Brimm
President of AFSCME Local 3280, Anna Veterans Home

We haven't always been state employees. We were privately operated starting out back in the 1990s, so we've had to fight for everything from forming the union to getting a contract and even going out on strike.

When we walked out on strike, we didn't know how long we would be out, how management would respond or what support we would get. A lot of the members were young, single mothers and many didn't know much about unions.

The one thing we all knew was that we had to stick together. We had to believe in each other.

The strike lasted five-and-a-half weeks and was very tough but we got a lot of support from veterans organizations and a lot of other local groups. People organized food drives and we worked to make sure that members with young children were getting what they needed.

That strike made the bonds between us even stronger. After all we had been through together, we had to be 100% union.

When we voted for the union to be formed it was 100%. When we voted for a strike it was 100%. When we ratified our first contract it was 100%.

Eventually AFSCME passed legislation to make our veterans home a state facility—and we all became state employees. So we stand before you today proud to be Local 3280 Anna Veterans Home Employees, part of the AFSCME Council 31 team and 100% UNION.



Darren Williams
President of AFSCME Local 3600, Lawrence Correctional Center

Our local membership is 100% for the first time in 14 years. There are two variables that contributed to the achievement of this goal.

First, through transparency, trust and delegation, we transformed how we operate at Local 3600. For instance, we had multiple people assigned to collecting signed green cards from our fair share fee payers.

The effort to reach every person was a collective one.

For some, we had to explain that the union needs resources to make sure members are represented in grievances, labor-management meetings, court battles and contract negotiations. For most, they sign up because they know that in our work and in our union we need to have each other's backs.

The second component to our success is Bruce Rauner. This man has made it very clear what he wants to do to organized labor. He wants to destroy it, drive down wages and increase the profits for corporate America. The members of AFSCME Council 31 along with every other union member from Illinois heard the call and rose to the challenge.

Membership, activism and resolve have never been stronger. We need to continue to lift our union brothers and sisters up. We need to motivate one another when times are tough.



Gary Ciaccio
President of AFSCME Local 29, Shapiro Developmental Center

Shapiro Center is a home for people with developmental disabilities. Residents need the care of a committed and experienced staff.

Twelve years ago our executive board decided to commit our local to being 100% union. That meant committing ourselves to get every single one of the people we represent—about 1,150—signed up as full members.

As public employees, we know our jobs are always on the line. Whether it's the economy, the state budget or politics—there's always pressure and threats. So the more unified we are, the stronger we are.

Being 100% union isn't just about getting people to sign membership cards. We work to keep people informed and involved. We have a monthly newsletter. We get together for picnics. We have active MAT teams and stewards.

And when there is a fight we ask every member to step up and get involved.

Whether it's just dealing with a grievance or fighting to save jobs, when you're 100% union you know that every single person you represent has made the decision that they want to be a part of the union. And that is power – power to deal with the threats we face now and in the future.



Presita West
AFSCME Local 3315, Cook County Public Defender’s Office

AFSCME Local 3315 worked to get to 100% union because it helps the union leverage power. There is strength in numbers and since we were in a long battle to negotiate a fair contract with Cook County, we knew we needed to show strength.

But it wasn’t just our contract negotiations that motivated people to sign up as members. The election of Bruce Rauner as governor also motivated people.

When he was running, Rauner’s anti-union attitude seemed abstract. But when he won and started to attack unions, it was real and it motivated people to join.

To get to 100% union, we went site to site to reach people and get them signed up as full members. Executive board members and stewards were very involved and we used email blasts and flyers to make sure everyone was informed. We made it personal—we figured out which steward knew the people we needed to get signed up. Someone who knew what was going on with them at work could really speak to that worker’s issues and concerns.

Being 100% union is very important to AFSCME Local 3315 because we know that we need that unity to make progress given the challenges we face.



Trudy Williams
President of AFSCME Local 3433, Fulton County

AFSCME Local 3433, representing Fulton County employees, is 100% union.

Why? I think part of it is that our part of the state has a rich labor history—with unionized companies like International Harvester, Hiram Walker, Keystone Steel and Wire Caterpillar all in our region.

Workers understood the importance of unions and the wages they secured through contracts. We lived through layoffs, shutdowns, contract disputes and strikes. We all heard “union talk” around the dinner table—it was a part of the fabric of our lives.

Time has changed Fulton County but the history hasn’t been forgotten. When our local was on strike a jury trial was underway. A juror came to our picket line—a young woman—saying she wouldn’t cross. We explained that she was legally bound to report for jury duty. She did but only after asking for and receiving one of our homemade pins, which said, “Support Your County Employees.” She put it on and walked into the courthouse.

That takes us back to the original question: Why and how is Local 3433 100% union? I guess my answer would have to be a question...

If we aren’t 100% union how could we face those like that juror who are supporting us 100%?



Yurvette Simmons
President of AFSCME Local 3237, United Cerebral Palsy and Easter Seals of Will County

Being 100% union means a lot to me because it’s about solidarity; it’s about standing together to fight for fairness.

Our Local wasn’t always strong. More than 20 years ago it started with just three people who got together to form a union because they didn’t think it was right for management to cut their pay when they were only making \$3.65 an hour. Management fought hard to stop the organizing but support grew and we finally got our union.

Of course we had to keep fighting—for a contract, for fair treatment, for better pay. But workers could see that when we came together we were stronger. That helped us get to 100% union.

I tell new hires my story. I was unfairly terminated because of my union activities, and my union fought for me, for my rights. It was a long fight and some people started to lose spirit. But when I got my job back and I walked back in to work it sent a message to everyone: if we stand together we win.

Being 100% union gives us strength and hope. Again and again we’ve seen that working together we make progress—sometimes big, sometimes small, but if we stand together we win.



U.S. Supreme Court set to rule on effort to knock out public sector unions

The United States Supreme Court has taken up a new case, *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, which poses a direct threat to the union rights of all public employees in every state of the nation.

WITH FRIEDRICHS, THE COURT COULD REVERSE ITS UNANIMOUS 1977 DECISION IN *ABOOD V. DETROIT BOARD OF EDUCATION* that recognized the right of public workers to join together and form a union that would exclusively represent them in collective bargaining negotiations. In *Abood*, the court also ruled that since all employees in a bargaining unit benefit from higher wages and benefits due to union representation, they all should share the cost of that representation, with those who choose not to join the union contributing a “fair share” fee rather than full membership dues. The fee is intended to cover the costs of all representational activities, while excluding the cost of any political activities in which the union might engage.

Anti-union scheme

TODAY, NEARLY 40 YEARS LATER, a variety of right-wing, anti-union organizations have recruited a small group of California teachers to claim that paying fair share fees violates their First Amendment constitutional rights. They assert that any union activity, including bargaining over wages and benefits, is, in effect, political activity—and a violation of their free speech rights—because it could impact public policy. For example, if a public employee union negotiated for higher wages for its members, it could contribute to higher government spending and possibly to a higher rate of taxation.

In reality, *Friedrichs* is just the latest ploy by the same wealthy interests that have been attacking working people for decades. With union membership down significantly in the private sector, they are looking to drastically



weaken the public sector unions that remain a strong voice for working families.

The plaintiffs in this case are asserting that they should not have to contribute even one penny toward the cost of the activities of the union that represents them. The argument seems ludicrous on its face to many legal experts. “But with a majority on the current Supreme Court that has consistently ruled in favor of corporate interests and against average working people, such absurdity is all too likely to become the law of the land,” AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said.

Silencing workers’ voices

THE FRIEDRICHS CASE CAME UP through lower courts after last summer’s decision in *Harris v. Quinn*—another legal challenge brought by anti-union right-wing front groups—in which the Court ruled that home care and child care workers are “quasi-public employees” who cannot be required to pay fair share fees even if they benefit from union representation. Spurred by the majority opinion in that case, the anti-worker forces moved *Friedrichs* up the legal ladder to take another shot at ending fair share entirely.

If the Supreme Court rules against working families in *Friedrichs*, the impact will be immediate and damaging. Right now, the vast majority of union-represented public workers choose to join the union and pay full dues, but a ruling to eliminate any required fee for representation would allow those who are currently paying fees to pay nothing at all, depriving unions of the resources needed to effectively advocate for their members.

Because unions are legally obligated to bargain on behalf of everyone in the units they represent, the loss of fair share fees could effectively demand that unions provide a range of services, such as negotiating over wages, for free to anyone who simply opts out of paying.

It’s no coincidence that this case comes at a time when public-sector unions are already being targeted by Republican governors like Bruce Rauner, who tried to wipe out fair share fees in Illinois state government with an illegal executive order that AFSCME stopped in court. The alliance of anti-worker politicians and wealthy special interests has succeeded in rolling back the rights of workers by passing so-called “right to work” laws even in former union strongholds Michigan and Wisconsin. If it

“We have built a union that fights for working families. Now we need to make sure that we don’t let the corporate elite succeed in their effort to take us out of the fight.”

—Roberta Lynch
AFSCME Council 31
Executive Director

rules for the plaintiffs, the Supreme Court could effectively enact a national law aimed at silencing the voices of workers at the bargaining table and in the political arena.

It’s about corporate profits, not union dues

NO PUBLIC EMPLOYEE IS NOW required to join a union or pay any fees that go to politics or political candidates. Nothing in the *Friedrichs* case will change that.

This manufactured case is just the latest example of an anti-worker, wealthy elite manipulating the rules for their own benefit and throwing America’s economy out of balance.

As AFSCME International President Lee Saunders told Council 31 members at the convention in October, “the opposition wants to make it about union dues. But [this case] goes much deeper than that. Corporate bosses want to undermine us so we can’t negotiate together. The aim of *Friedrichs* is to make the ‘right to work’ scam the law for the entire public sector.”

Collective bargaining at risk

WHATEVER THE DECISION—which could come as soon as April 2016—AFSCME members have to be prepared to stand up for their rights and continue their efforts to keep the economy fair and balanced.

“Public sector unions face the biggest challenge in America today,” Lynch told union members at the convention. “If the U.S. Supreme Court gives the green light to eliminate fair share fees, we have to be ready to respond by strengthening our union at the grassroots level. We have built a fighting union that has stood up to every employer, every politician that tries to hurt working families. Now we need to make sure that we don’t let the corporate elite succeed in this effort to starve unions of resources and take us out of the fight.”

New federal health insurance tax will weigh on workers' shoulders

So-called "Cadillac Tax" would shrink health care benefits, cut income for working families

The Affordable Care Act (ACA, often called "Obamacare") undoubtedly reshaped the nation's health care landscape for the better, expanding access to health coverage for millions of Americans.

BUT THE LAW CONTAINS ONE MISGUIDED—AND MISNAMED—PROVISION AIMED STRAIGHT AT the pocketbooks of middle-class families.

The so-called "Cadillac Tax," a 40 percent excise tax on higher-cost health plans, is intended to help pay for subsidies the ACA provides to those who otherwise couldn't afford health insurance. Although the tax is levied on insurers, these costs will be passed down to employers who will then attempt to pass them to employees in the form of higher health care costs and/or reduced compensation.

These health plans are far from the luxury vehicles that the popularized term "Cadillac Tax" implies. The targeted plans—plans that cost more than \$10,200 for an individual or \$27,500 for a family—are most often found in workplaces where employees are represented by unions that have bargained over years or even decades to secure good, affordable health care—often trading wage increases for better health benefits. And while the "Cadillac Tax" moniker suggests it will apply to a select few, experts say a majority of employers would eventually face the prospect of what will be the first-ever tax on health care benefits in the United States.

To avert that kind of supposedly unintended consequence, a bipartisan coalition of employers and unions is seeking to repeal the tax before it goes into effect in 2018. Congress is considering two bills to do that, with more than 200 bipartisan sponsors between them. And presidential candidates Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton have already come out against the tax as yet another blow to working families.

So if no one wants the tax, why is it in the ACA?

THE HEALTH CARE TAX IS SAID TO generate \$91 billion over the next decade. Many economists argue that repealing the tax would leave a gaping hole in the federal budget that

must be filled by an alternative revenue stream.

"The health care tax solution is directly at odds with the goal of health care reform," AFSCME Council 31 Director of Research and Employee Benefits Martha Merrill said. "It was included to pay for key components of the ACA. But by targeting higher-cost plans, the tax puts the burden of funding health care reform on workers and jeopardizes the health benefits they rely on."

Americans with higher-cost health care plans are either working families who have fought hard for their benefits as part of their compensation package or they are people who have high-cost plans due to age, gender, illness or injury. Also, premium costs can be higher in some cities or regions than others; a plan in Illinois, for instance, could face the excise tax, while the exact same plan in Minnesota would not.

Arguments for the tax fall short

PROponents of the tax say that while it might lead employers to reduce employee health benefits, those "savings" would then be passed along to their workers through higher wages.

This theory does not pass the laugh test. Wages have stagnated for 40 years. With the decline of union density in the private sector, most workers today don't have the bargaining power to claim their fair share of income. And the continuing attacks on collective bargaining, both in the private and the public sectors, will only make the situation worse.

Another argument for the tax is that it would reduce the overall demand for health care services. If employees are forced to pay more directly for medical services, the argument goes, they will have a better understanding of true health care costs and be less apt to get unnecessary or costly treatment.

But as has already been demonstrated in this country, the opposite is true: In an

attempt to avoid unaffordable medical bills, people will skip needed care until they are seriously ill, driving up costs throughout the system.

Employers bring worries to bargaining table

UNFORTUNATELY FOR WORKING families, a survey by the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans found that although more than half of all employers are on pace to trigger the 2018 tax—including three-quarters of public employers—only five percent of them plan to pay it. Instead, these employers will make changes to avoid

the tax. Common strategies include shifting costs to employees, moving employees to plans with higher deductibles and copayments, reducing benefits and dropping higher-cost plan options.

"We're seeing it right now at the bargaining table," Merrill said. "Employers are worried about the tax and don't want to wait until 2018 to make changes to employee benefit plans. AFSCME is strongly resisting any cost-shifting to employees as we seek repeal of this unfair tax."

AFSCME is joining with other unions to urge Congress to rescind the tax. "We continue to support the

Affordable Care Act, but the excise tax on high-cost plans can randomly and unfairly cause hardship to American workers and their families," said Kim Anderson of the National Education Association.

Millions of working Americans depend on good health insurance to protect their families and to squeeze the most out of shrinking paychecks. In the interest of a balanced and fair economy, Congress must repeal the health care excise tax before it goes into effect in 2018 and deals yet another blow to already struggling working families.



FAQ:

NEW HEALTH CARE TAX

What is the "Cadillac" Tax?

- A 40% federal excise tax on higher-cost health plans, effective January 1, 2018.

Who does the health care tax impact?

- The tax is levied on insurers, but they will likely pass the costs down to employers, who will in turn try to pass it down to workers.
- Plans offered by 60% of all employers (including 77% of public employers) could trigger the tax.

How will employers try to pay for the new tax?

- Shift costs to employees
- Move to high-deductible health plans
- Reduce benefits
- Drop higher-cost plan options

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL



Western Illinois University clerical employees win first contract

A FOUR-YEAR ODYSSEY OF ORGANIZING, negotiating and fighting for fairness has finally culminated in a first union contract for nearly 200 clerical employees at Western Illinois University in Macomb. The group joined

AFSCME in 2011 and began bargaining with university management. Three years later, after reaching a tentative agreement that included a four-percent wage increase, the workers received notice from the university that it would only

pay half that amount—just a two-percent increase. “We said no,” said Suzanne Boussaard, office manager in the Department of Military Science. “We had agreed on four percent, so we charged WIU with unfair

labor practice.” About a year later, the Illinois Labor Relations Board issued a complaint against WIU for not bargaining in good faith and for refusing to put the contract in writing. It scheduled a hearing for September 2015.

“Prior to going to hearing, we settled on an agreement and ratified the new contract,” Boussaard said. “In the end, we got a two-percent raise last year and another two-percent raise this year.” Without the union, workers would have received no raise this year.

Boussaard has 20 years in the state university system and sees her union membership as an investment in her future. “We all have an interest in our financial future, for our kids’ college education or our own retirement,” she said. “This is the same thing. Wages, benefits, pensions—this is an investment.”

“We are thrilled we finally have a contract to protect,” Boussaard said. “We got a raise, but we also increased our bereavement and terminal illness leave policies up to 10 days depending on the relationship. Three days doesn’t cut it. I lost my husband in 2004 to cancer and three days is not enough. So we were happy with that.”

WIU clerical employees ratified their three-year agreement on September 29. The bargaining team was led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Randy Lynch and included Boussaard, Barb Woolam, Deanna Stambaugh, Dixie Bodenhamer and Toni DePoy.

Second chances at Southwood Interventions

AFSCME MEMBERS AT SOUTHWOOD INTERVENTIONS recently won a two-year agreement that provides raises and better benefits for the workers at this Chicago substance abuse treatment facility.

“We’re helping people start their lives over again, finding new direction and functioning in their families in a better way,” said Craig Porter, president of AFSCME Local 1537 and a union member for 20 years.

More than 65 AFSCME members at Southwood Interventions will benefit from a 2.5 percent raise in the first year of the agreement; there will be an opportunity to negotiate further wage increases in year two.

Under the new contract, workers are considered full time at 30 hours a week instead of 40 hours, so these members are now eligible



for health care, paid time off and a 401(k) retirement plan.

Porter and Vice President Oliver Ball, both counselors at Southwood, attended a steward training at the AFSCME Chicago office in October. They believe the union contract helps the

workers and the people they serve. “When staff members are supported, we work with clients in a more positive way,” Porter said.

Porter, Ball and Natasha Hudson served on the bargaining committee, which was led by AFSCME Council 31 staff representative Kathy Steichen. The team was able to hammer out an agreement with Abraxas—the company that owns Interventions—after just two sets of three-day negotiations.

Kankakee County Health Department employees proud of progress

THIS SUMMER KANKAKEE COUNTY reported a \$4.1 million deficit, and during negotiations with AFSCME Local 1874, the county Health Department insisted for months that it lacked funds to provide raises for any employees.

But the AFSCME bargaining team was ready to fight for livable wages for the nurses, sanitarians, phlebotomists, social workers, HIV specialists, client care advocates, clerical workers and others in its ranks. “Some of these workers are making \$9.50 an hour, which is not a living wage when you’re trying to support a family,” said Gerri Cote, local president and a circuit clerk employee. “I’m proud of the raises we won.”

Despite all the challenges, the bargaining team was able to secure a total of eight percent in raises over

the four-year agreement.

“The county is in dire straits, but the health department is not dependent on the general fund. A lot of its funding comes from state grants,” Cote said. Bargaining dragged out for six months, but in the end, the union won more personal days for longevity and vacation time, guaranteed overtime on weekends and expanded benefits for certification holders.

“Most jobs at the health department require an education and continuing certification,” Cote said. “These positions still aren’t what they should be. If you look at other health departments, they are still low.” But this AFSCME local is ready for the challenge, according to Cote: “Next time we will be trying to get all the workers to a livable wage.”

Led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Jeff Dexter, the bargaining team included President Gerri

Continued on the facing page



Members of AFSCME Local 799 and Local 1805 walked in solidarity with Illinois Federation of Teachers members who were on strike in East St. Louis for fair wages.

Continued from the facing page

Cote, Pam Morrison, Bryan Kennedy, Tammy Ponton, Executive Board Member Carol Hartman and Treasurer Linda McKay who sadly passed away from cancer during the process.

Warren County employees protect affordable health insurance

FOR YEARS, WARREN COUNTY has claimed to be too financially strapped to provide significant wage increases for its hardworking employees, but this time, AFSCME Local 3762 won a two-year agreement with two-percent annual raises while protecting members' health insurance.

"They always manage to cry the blues about being broke at contract time, but our pay scale is low compared to comparable counties," union member Dale Kruse said. "We were at impasse and the mediator helped reach an agreement."

Kruse is an operator at the highway department who has been an AFSCME member for 15 years. He finds that as the highway department loses staff, he's been doing more and more work, and says that members are concerned with the high turnover rates for county employees, especially in corrections. "Our corrections officers get their training and after six months or so they move on—it costs the county a lot but they aren't taking the steps needed to solve this problem."

Led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Randy Lynch, the AFSCME Local 3762 bargaining team includ-

ed Kruse, Kim Andersen and Russ Johnson. They will be back at the table next year with a focus on health care costs: "The board said they are only making this a two-year agreement because they are worried about the Cadillac tax and how it could impact their bottom line in 2018," Kruse said.

City of Alton employees protect seniority, win raises

AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR OF negotiations, members of AFSCME Local 3388 settled a three-year agreement with the City of Alton in September. "There was a lot of give and take but in the end we got a pretty good deal," said Sue Wuellner-Derr, president of the local and an accounting clerk in the comptroller's

office for almost 20 years.

The biggest sticking point was that management was attempting to rewrite the process for promotions so that seniority was not a factor. "A job had been the same for 10 years and all of a sudden you had to have a college degree to qualify—20 years of experience at the city didn't matter," Wuellner-Derr said.

The union bargaining team fought these changes hard and won. "The city also wanted to do away with a fair and progressive longevity program and we had to fight to preserve that," AFSCME Council 31 staff representative Ed LaPorte said.

The bargaining team was able to win a three-percent raise in the first year of the agreement, followed by 2.5 percent raises in each of the next two years, for the local's

35 clerical employees, corrections officers, dispatchers and janitorial employees. LaPorte and Wuellner-Derr were joined on the bargaining team by Vice President Martha Roberts, Secretary Kim Dever, Colleen Moore and Jenifer Martin.

"Our wages were frozen in the last contract because the city was in financial straits. We hadn't had a raise in five years," Wuellner-Derr said. "I'm proud of what we accomplished."

Lombard Public Works Department sets new wage structure

MORE THAN 30 MEMBERS OF AFSCME Local 89 at the Village of Lombard Public Works Department ratified a four-year contract that will raise wages by 23.5 percent over the life of the agreement. All employees will receive annual across-the-board wage increases, but the largest pay bump comes with the adoption of a new wage structure.

The bargaining team was successful in making the case that Lombard should make a meaningful investment in its workforce. "The Village was experiencing high turnover. After investing in hiring and training new employees, they were losing them," AFSCME Local 89 President Tom Opolony said. "So we put a step system in place. The village was getting to keep a lower starting rate, but workers were able to see a faster progression for their hard work."

Opolony was a member of the bargaining team, which also won increases in compensatory time accrual, a uniform allowance and added two new license bonuses to their agreement. Led by AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative David Dorn, Opolony was joined by Mike Bergen (vice president), Nate Conn, Tony Hernandez, Patrick Rooney and David Moody (former member and treasurer).

A village employee for 13 years, Opolony was a little worried at the start of bargaining. Because more than half of the membership had recently retired due to a mutually beneficial early retirement program, the local not only had to negotiate a contract but also sign up and educate new members.

"We had a game plan that was based on members that had left, but then we had new people coming in with new ideas," Opolony said. "We wanted their input. We had a good negotiation and a good contract and that was all because of the new members joining and participating."

Members at the public works department maintain and repair public assets in the village's fleet, water, forestry, sign, streets and roads departments. "We are very encouraged and excited with the direction we're going," said Opolony. "But that doesn't mean we can rest on our laurels; we have to build from here. We have to keep growing."



Members of AFSCME Locals 3700 and 698—clerical, administrative and technical employees of the University of Illinois—have been fighting for a fair contract for more than a year. They are building support in the community with a series of public actions.

AFSCME wages legal battles to protect workers' rights

Just as Governor Rauner has mounted an all-out assault on AFSCME members—attacking the integrity of public service workers, trying to weaken our unions and undermining the important public services we provide to our communities—the union is fighting back on multiple fronts as well.

THE GOVERNOR'S FIRST TARGET HAS BEEN HIS OWN EMPLOYEES, THOSE WHO WORK FOR THE State of Illinois, whom he can most directly impact through contract negotiations, executive orders and administrative policy changes.

In addition to building support in the legislature, in local communities and through the news media, Council 31 has filed several lawsuits to enforce the union contract and protect members' rights.

What follows is the latest on the status of those court cases as On the Move went to press.

Paycheck protection

IN JULY, AFSCME AND OTHER unions representing state employees filed suit in St. Clair County Court to clearly establish that state employees must continue to be paid even without a state budget in place. The unions requested and the Circuit Court granted a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) directing the state to pay all employees on time and in full. The TRO was affirmed on appeal and the case was remanded to Circuit Court, where no hearing dates have yet been set.

Health care

IN SEPTEMBER, THE ILLINOIS Department of Central Management Services (CMS) announced that the state would stop paying medical claims incurred after July 1 in its self-insured health insurance (PPO) plans that cover state government and state university employees, retirees and their dependents, and stop paying premiums in the

fully-insured (HMO) plans. While CMS assured plan participants that most health care providers had agreed to continue to charge only the usual co-pays and deductibles, AFSCME members worried that if the budget impasse dragged on, growing numbers of providers might begin to demand up-front payment of full medical costs. For that reason, the union amended its original St. Clair County complaint (above) to seek to compel payment of all medical and dental claims and premiums as well.

Step, semi-automatic and longevity increases

AFSCME ALSO AMENDED THE St. Clair complaint to advance the legal claim that state employees are entitled to scheduled increases that the governor has no right to unilaterally withhold. A hearing date on this matter has not been set. Separately, the Illinois Labor Relations Board has launched an investigation in response to an unfair labor practice charge AFSCME filed over the same issues and has already issued a complaint over the refusal to pay step increases.

Layoffs

AFTER GOV. RAUNER THREATENED to lay off more than 150 state workers represented by AFSCME, the Illinois Police Benevolent and Protective Association and the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the three unions filed grievances challenging the layoffs and jointly filed suit in circuit court seeking an injunction in aid of arbitration to halt the layoffs until the grievances are resolved. The Rauner Administration subsequently agreed to halt the layoffs while the arbitration case is proceeding. But Rauner went forward with his plan to shut down all six Illinois State Museum sites and the Sparta Shooting Range, effectively locking out the public while the employees continue working.

Pensions

WHEN THE ILLINOIS SUPREME Court found SB 1—legislation cutting the pension benefits of teachers and state workers—unconstitutional, union members hoped that ruling would forestall any further efforts to reduce public employee pensions. But then Chicago Mayor Rahm

"Our legal strategy continues to play a key role in our fight against the assault on union members."

**—Mike Newman
AFSCME Council 31
Deputy Director**

Emanuel insisted that SB 1922, legislation cutting the pensions of active and retired City of Chicago employees, was based on a different legal theory and was constitutional. So AFSCME, along with the Chicago Teachers Union, Illinois Nurses Association and Teamsters Local 700, filed another legal challenge, this time in Cook County Circuit Court, seeking to strike down that law, which sharply reduced pension benefits for participants in the City of Chicago's Municipal Employees Annuity and Benefit Fund (MEABF). In July Circuit Court Judge Rita Novak ruled in favor of the unions, overturning the law as a violation of the Illinois constitution. But the Emanuel administration appealed Judge Novak's ruling directly to Illinois Supreme Court. Briefs have been filed in the case and the Court heard oral arguments on November 17.

Back pay

AFSCME ATTORNEYS APPEARED before the Illinois Supreme Court in late September, culminating a years-long legal battle for back pay owed to thousands of state employees since 2011, when the Quinn Administration withheld payment of a negotiated wage increase.

The case started as an AFSCME grievance in which an independent arbitrator ruled that the money was owed and must be paid. The Illinois Attorney General took the position that the money was not owed because the Legislature did not appropriate it, and appealed the arbitrator's ruling. AFSCME won the appeals at both the Circuit Court and Appellate Court levels. The union is now awaiting a final ruling from the state Supreme Court.

There is no deadline for the court to issue a final ruling, which may not come for many months.



RETIREE NOTES



AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31 Hall of Fame inductees (left to right): Karren Holloway, accepting on behalf of Michael Boulter, South Cook sub-chapter; Janet Lease, accepting on behalf of Joyce Brown (posthumous), Quad Cities sub-chapter; Mary Jones, Chicago sub-chapter; Alan Latoza, Carbondale sub-chapter; and David Spinner, Decatur-Litchfield sub-chapter.

Retiree delegates meet for Chapter 31 Convention

AFSCME RETIREE CHAPTER 31 held its 15th biennial convention on October 14-15 in Springfield. The convention is a time for retiree leaders and delegates from across Illinois to gather, share ideas, learn, and set action plans for the preservation of retirement security for public sector workers.

Convention attendees participated in workshops on a variety of critical topics. Guest speakers included State Senator Sam McCann; Jeanne Cameron, executive director of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans; Ben Hodap, deputy director of AFSCME Retirees International; AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch and Deputy Director Mike Newman.

Chapter 31 retirees elected new executive board and line officers at this year's convention:

President: Larry Brown of sub-chapter #56 (Chester), reelected

Vice President: Shirley Byrd of sub-chapter #57 (Kankakee), reelected

Vice President: Audrey Allaman of sub-chapter #77 (Galesburg)

Vice President: Dorothy Asbury of sub-chapter #59 (Metro-East), reelected

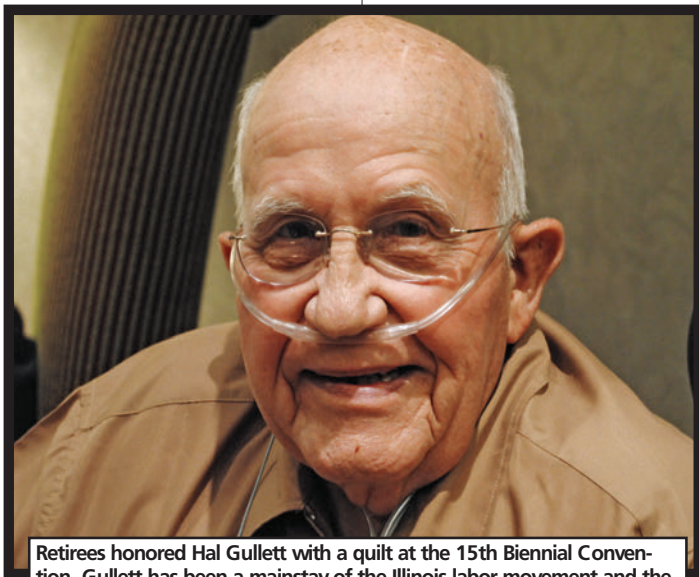
Recording Secretary: Barbara Franklin of sub-chapter #88 (Champaign-Urbana), reelected

Secretary Treasurer: Mary Jones of sub-chapter #60 (Chicago), reelected

AFSCME retiree convention delegates pass dues increase, other resolutions

CITING THE INCREASING COST OF operations, as well as legal

costs stemming from successful court cases which protected AFSCME retirees' pension and health care benefits, delegates to the 15th biennial retiree convention passed a constitutional amendment



Retirees honored Hal Gullett with a quilt at the 15th Biennial Convention. Gullett has been a mainstay of the Illinois labor movement and the fight for retirement security, having also served on the board of AFSCME International Retirees Council from 1994-2015, as president of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans from 2001-2009, and as Northern Vice-President for Chapter 31 from 2007-2015.



Georgan Simmons, sub-chapter 60 and elections committee chair, enjoys the convention program.

increasing member dues from \$2 per month to \$3 per month effective January 1, 2016.

"We have been continually defending our benefits in courts, in the capitol and in our home towns for the past several years," Larry Brown, president of Chapter 31 said. "We have been largely successful, but these fights take time and resources. Now more than ever we need to make sure we are prepared to take on those who seek to undermine our retirement security."

"This dues increase will be especially helpful to those of us who belong to smaller sub-chapters," said Kathy Breeden, president of the Galesburg sub-chapter. "The largest share of the increase goes back to sub-chapters, allowing us to more effectively communicate with our members."

Delegates also passed a number of resolutions setting the course of the statewide chapter for the next two years. Along with resolutions aimed at the protection of retirement security and organizing retirees for political action, the retiree delegates also passed resolutions opposing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, demanding repeal of the Government Pension Offset law that targets public sector retirees' Social Security benefits, and supporting the organizing mission of currently working AFSCME members.

Despite budget impasse, retirees will still receive monthly pension check

STATE AND UNIVERSITY RETIREES will continue to receive their monthly pension benefit despite an announcement from Comptroller Leslie Munger that Illinois will skip payments to the pension funds due to the ongoing budget impasse.

On Wednesday, October 14, Munger announced that the state will delay its \$560 million monthly pension payment that represents employer contributions to state pension funds for November. The pension funds involved include the State Employees' Retirement System, the State University Retirement System, the Teacher's Retirement System, the General Assembly Retirement System, and the Judges'

Retirement System.

"The fact is that our state simply does not have the revenue to meet its obligations," Munger stated.

While this is yet another instance of the state underfunding the pension systems, individual retirees will continue to receive their monthly annuity check in November and every month thereafter as scheduled.

State pension funding has become the latest victim of Governor Rauner's unwillingness to develop and enact the FY16 budget, including revenue measures needed to fund it. Rauner continues to insist that he will not seek additional revenue until state legislators enact anti-union legislation, effectively holding state services hostage.

Chicago retirees win pension refund

CITY OF CHICAGO RETIREES have begun to receive refunds from cuts made to their pension payments starting January 1, 2015.

AFSCME, along with the Chicago Teachers Union, Illinois Nurses Association and Teamsters Local 700, successfully sued the city over a new law that sharply reduced pension benefits for employees and retirees who participate in the City of Chicago's Municipal Employees Annuity and Benefit Fund (MEABF). The lawsuit charged that city retirees earned their promised pension and always paid their share into the pension fund and urged the court to find the new law unconstitutional.

In July, Circuit Court Judge Rita Novak ruled in favor of the unions, striking down the law as a violation of the Illinois constitution. The judge also ordered that any reductions in retirees' pension benefits as a result of implementation of the law must be restored.

The MEABF has informed AFSCME's attorneys that refunds of all of the monies unjustly deducted have been included in all retirees' pension payments. If you do not believe you received your refund, contact the MEABF directly.

The Emanuel administration appealed Judge Novak's ruling directly to the Illinois Supreme Court. Oral arguments are set for November 17.

Paying up-front for medical care?

IF YOU HAVE HAD TO MAKE ANY up-front payments for medical services due to the state budget impasse, please contact AFSCME Council 31 Retiree Coordinator David Amerson: damerson@afcme31.org.

Peoria city employees win tough contract battle



AFSCME members and supporters rallied outside Peoria City Hall on October 20, protesting for fair pay. "Middle class people are tired of getting stamped on. We think that equal pay for equal work is a right," AFSCME Council 31 Staff Representative Tim Lavelle told reporters.

Employees of the City of Peoria bargained hard for a year, and in the end won a new contract with solidarity, determination and community support.

AFSCME Local 3464 represents more than 120 Peoria city workers, including clerical, code enforcement and parking enforcement employees and 911 operators. Since 2010, there has been a 40 percent reduction in staff, but the workers are providing the same level of services, saving the city almost \$4 million a year in payroll costs.

Despite that fact, the bargaining committee knew this would be a tough negotiation due to the financial and political climate. City management was pushing for a wage freeze that included eliminating step and longevity increases.

Making matters worse, the local was surprised to see across the table new legal counsel who, they found out later, came from the same firm the Rauner administration hired to negotiate the state contract.

"We felt Rauner's agenda was being worked in Peoria," said AFSCME Local 3464 President Sherry Carter-Allen, a police code enforcement inspector. "You say you don't have money, but you're getting this high-cost attorney from the same firm that Rauner uses to fight against AFSCME to sit at your side of the table? We decided to fight as hard as we could to save our steps and longevity pay."

Solidarity works its magic

Throughout the contract campaign, AFSCME Local 3464 had the support of the community. Sister AFSCME locals in Peoria helped drive calls to city council members, asking them to honor their commitment to long-term employees. The local worked closely with Peoria's NAACP chapter, which has been critical of the city's hiring practices.

The situation came to a head one night in October. The NAACP was in City Hall presenting its 10-year plan to improve city hiring practices for women

and minorities. Outside, AFSCME members were echoing the advocates' complaints, saying that by eliminating longevity pay, the city would disproportionately hurt women workers, the majority of the workforce.

More than 100 members of the State of Illinois Bargaining Committee, who were in Peoria for negotiations with the Rauner Administration, joined the picket line. As they marched, their call for fair treatment echoed through the downtown streets and drew honking horns and waves of support from passing motorists.

"When we went in to negotiate the next day, it was like someone had turned a switch," Council 31 Staff Representative Tim Lavelle said. The city finally agreed to maintain longevity pay for long-term employees and offered a cumulative wage increase of 7.5 percent over the four-year agreement.

"When it came to economics, they didn't want to move," Carter-Allen said. "But after that night, it was all of a sudden like, 'Wow, there is solidarity in AFSCME.' It was fantastic." Although the local ended up accepting a freeze on step increases for the life of the contract, they successfully safeguarded the step language in the contract and sustained longevity pay for employees with many years dedicated to public service.

The local ratified the agreement on November 6, but their biggest battles may lie ahead. Even as the bargaining team was planning ratification meetings, news came of potential layoffs. Now the local is mobilizing to fight to save their jobs and the services they provide.

The AFSCME Local 3464 bargaining team included Lavelle, Carter-Allen, Rhonda Sexton (vice president), Wanda Adkisson (treasurer), Cecilia Buckner (secretary), Ben Krokum, Nancy Bragg, Kimberlee Thomas and Josh Naven.

The Peoria City Council unanimously approved the agreement at its November 17 meeting.



SPOTLIGHT ON

Sherry Carter-Allen: Fourth-generation unionist

I have union running through my veins. My great-grandfather started a "colored" coal miners' union in Kentucky, which cost him the life of his eldest son. My grandfather was a UAW Caterpillar welder for 35 years. My grandmother was a member of the Illinois Federation of Teachers for more than 30 years. My mother was the first woman and first African-American to be a spark tester for United Steelworkers Local 65. Now I am a proud member and president of AFSCME Local 3464.

When I think of union, I think of strength. I think of how our neighbors all pulled together as one. I think of justice and the same soul-stirring feeling I felt in my first civil rights march as a young girl.

My children were raised to understand that without union protection and the ability to work in a fair environment—which is our inalienable right—and to have fair and equitable wages, we as people of color would never have equal pay for equal work.

I'm so proud to be a fourth-generation unionist. We are a proud union family. For us, it's not just a slogan, it's a way of life.